COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Vice President Spiro T. Agnew and Admiral McCain discuss Asian affairs. (Photo—Courtesy of Los Angeles Times)

Collective Security In Asia—*Part I*

By Admiral John S. McCain Jr.
Commander-in-Chief Pacific

(This is the first of a three-part series of an address by Admiral McCain before the Hawaii Chapter of the Association of the United States Army. His topic: "Collective Security In Asia." The admiral has been commander-in-chief Pacific since July 1968. His address covers the military and foreign affairs situation of the geographic area under his responsibility.)

* * *

We are living in a dangerous era. We will not survive if we do not rise to the challenges of our nation's security. That is why I feel it is quite appropriate for you to know more about the significance of the Pacific Ocean area and its implications for our country's security. My subject is "Collective Security in Asia"—a timely topic that is of vital importance to our people and nation.

The threat of aggressive communism in Asia affects the peace of the area, American national power in the Pacific,

(Continued on Page Two)

Military Phase Of Vietnamization Encouraging To Defense Officials

The military phase of the Vietnamization program is ahead of schedule in every aspect and advancing at "a very good rate."

That is how Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird summed up the Vietnamization program Feb. 15 when he returned from Southeast Asia.

"I look forward to continuing troop reductions based upon the Vietnamization program," he told reporters at Andrews AFB, Md.

Following are remarks by Secretary Laird and General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Question: Would you say, sir, then that as of now if it continues you are ahead of schedule, come April 15th you could recommend more than 50,000 troops of the last cutback?

Secretary Laird: No, I would not make any projection or forecast along that line. Since I've been secretary of defense I've stayed away from forecasts or projections. This is a matter that will be reviewed at that time. An announcement will be made by the President of the United States based upon the criteria that have been outlined. I merely wish to

(Continued on Page Eight)

Over-all Interest Of The Nation Basis For Management Decisions

An "infallible" crystal ball possessing great scope and a wide range would be most helpful in providing more effective management in the Department of Defense.

Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard explained why he thought the crystal ball would help at a meeting of the American Management Association Personnel Conference Feb. 13 in Chicago.

Mr. Packard made his remarks after receiving the 1969 Henry Laurence Gantt Memorial Medal, presented annually for "distinguished achievement in management as a service to the country."

Following are excerpts from Mr. Packard's address:

The job of management in the Department of Defense includes all aspects of management that are involved in any enterprise. There are also some significant differences—the first to come to mind is sheer size. The Department currently employs 4.6 million people, military and civilian—almost as

(Continued on Page Six)

Location of Pacific Command Headquarters in relation to four Communist Countries

Collective Security In Asia—Admiral McCain

(Continued From Page One)

and the problem of collective security throughout this vast region. Its significance is underscored by the fact that in my area of responsibility, the Pacific Command, live more than one-third of the people on earth under 25 different flags.

In the Pacific we are facing the whole gamut of threats, both active and potential, that the communists have at their disposal. A glance at a map shows that, of the communist nations in the world, the four which present threats to Free World security—Communist China, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, and North Korea—border the Western Pacific.

We must be aware of the continuing threat which our country faces from the ambitions, goals, and activities of the communist world. This is a real threat and the stark truth is that we must recognize it if we are to keep the peace. Only a firm, positive posture on our part, backed by adequate military capabilities, can assure the security of this country, and with it, that of the Free World.

We have had many "trouble spots" across the globe since VJ-Day in 1945, a day we thought would bring peace to the world. But what may be surprising to many is that there have actually been some one hundred "shooting wars" during that period, and countless additional "incidents" and "crises."

The Pacific has not especially been an area of tranquility and peace during this period. There have been many major trouble spots along the eastern arc of Asia, from Korea in the northeast to the Indonesian archipelago.

The greatest safeguard to contain such flare-ups is to provide the strong and constant influence of our deterrent capability and our military commitments throughout this uncertain and restive area.

Deterrence requires the capability of projecting military power where it is needed, when it is needed, and to the degree of force that might be directed by our government. To put it very simply, we must maintain the ability to arrive on the spot, in strength, and promptly. And it is also vital that any potential troublemaker knows that we have this capability.

In an area as vast as the Pacific Command, our deterrent posture demands a high degree of mobility and a carefully planned deployment. It calls for a flexibility and a versatility that allows for discriminating application of military force.

Finally, we must have adequate strength in forces and weapons, for in some areas in this world that is still the only language that is fully understood and respected.

There have been a number of examples in recent history when our deployed military capabilities have served to snuff out incipient explosive situations.

In the Near East the landing of our Marines at Lebanon is one such example. In the Far East the firm action of our Seventh Fleet during the attacks at Quemoy and Matsu was another. Much closer to our own shores, our military deployment to the Dominican Republic was a major factor in resolving that situation.

But the most dramatic—and possibly the most critical—example in recent history was the so-called "Cuban confrontation" in which the two major nuclear powers faced each other eyeball to eyeball, each knowing that the other could press the nuclear trigger.

Here we virtually mobilized our forces. Our air power took

to the skies on a 24-hour alert. We moved Army and Marine units to within easy striking distance of Cuba. Our Navy formed a blockading cordon around the island. All of this the Russians knew. They knew as well that we would not back away from our stance. It was the physical deployment of our air, land, and sea forces—just as much as the readiness of our long-range missiles—that led the Russian leadership to order their missile-carrying ships to turn back.

To understand the threat we face in the Pacific fully, it is necessary to review three major developments that have virtually rewritten the textbooks on both military strategies and on political alignments.

The first of these developments is the revolution in military weaponry resulting from the much-publicized "technological explosion" of the past few decades.

The second is the rapid segmentation of the world's peoples in more and ever more independent nations.

The third is the continuing aim of some communists to impose their system on mankind, by any means—political or military, open or subversive.

Let me discuss these one by one.

Everyone knows that modern technology has created what might be termed the "ultimate weapon" in that it could destroy any spot on earth in a matter of minutes. That, of course, is the nuclear armed ballistic missile. We have this in two forms, the Minuteman, launched from protected silos deep in the earth . . . and the Polaris launched from mobile atomic-powered submarines deep beneath the surface of the sea. These have been well publicized.

Less well known are a host of weapons, both offensive and defensive, covering a broad spectrum of military uses. Let me give just a few examples.

In the air we have the "Sidewinder" attack missile which seeks out its flying target by "homing" on the heat of its

F-100 Firing Sidewinder

jet exhaust. Quite literally, this follows the enemy aircraft and climbs right up its tailpipe before it explodes to destroy its target.

An example in ground warfare hardware is a new counter mortar radar which detects incoming rounds and calculates the exact firing positions of enemy mortars for returning fire directly onto the target.

Another advance in aerial technology is a reconnaissance aircraft that can photograph minute detail from positions many miles high, making it extremely difficult for an enemy to conceal his installations or his moves.

A highly ingenious and interesting defensive weapon, developed for the jungle fighting in Vietnam, is commonly called the people sniffer. In principle it detects, chemically, the presence of human bodies, no matter how dark the night, how silent the approach, or how thick the jungle.

Minuteman

Polaris

No discussion of modern weapons can ignore the impact of the computer—on guidance systems, on fire control, on communications, on navigation. But, there is one area in which no computer, no technological breakthrough, has been able to change a fundamental of warfare as old as warfare itself.

And that is that the decisive "weapon" in all warfare is the man on the ground with the gun on the spot. Whatever preliminaries may be carried out through the use of technological triumphs, it is that man on the ground with the gun on the spot who must occupy and hold the disputed areas. That is as true today in Vietnam as it was in the time of the Roman legions, or of the caveman who started all warfare as such with his club.

But there is one big difference. No matter how slowly he may crawl through the jungle, or edge his way forward to attack, the modern U.S. soldier, the man with the gun, rides to the scene of his combat job . . . in a jet aircraft, in a fast transport, in a truck, or, now for the first time in a major war, in a helicopter. In fact, I might add, wherever you may be in Vietnam today, you are certain to see helicopters overhead . . . carrying troops, delivering supplies, replenishing ammunition, ferrying wounded.

But when he gets there, this man with the gun still uses his own two feet when confronting his enemy in combat—to do his part of the job that eventually settles all wars.

(To Be Continued)

Man, Weapon, Transportation

Entering An Era On Negotiation

The U.S. And Western Europe—II

A major policy speech on the U.S. relationship to Western Europe and Western European security was recently delivered by Under Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson. Pointing out that Senator Mike Mansfield, "one of the most thoughtful students of America's role in world affairs," has introduced in the Senate a resolution calling for substantial reductions of U. S. forces in Europe, Mr. Richardson analyzed the suppositions on which our European policy rests, its continuing validity, and the proposals being made for change.

Following is Part II of excerpts from Secretary Richardson's address of January 20. Part I appeared in the February 14 issue of COMMANDERS DIGEST.

If we have not neglected the consideration of means by which our presence in Europe could be streamlined or modified without damaging the essential structure of the [NATO] Alliance, neither have we ignored the opportunities which the era of negotiation we have now entered may hold for the future. In this area we must also make meticulous and balanced judgments, taking care not to allow our efforts to bring about agreements with the Soviet Union to undermine our relations with our friends in Western Europe.

We must have a proper regard for the always latent fear

'When there is no more threat to the security of the nations of Western Europe, there will be no more need for NATO.'

that agreements will be reached detrimental to European interests. We cannot, of course, allow the existence of this fear to deter us from seeking to lower tensions. Ironically, in fact, there exists among a younger generation of Europeans the converse suspicion that the United States and the USSR are collaborators in defense of the status quo. But we intend to do everything possible to allay such fears and suspicions by sticking strictly to our pledge to consult closely with our allies and take their interests into account as talks go forward.

During the past year in-depth consultations have been held on a wide range of subjects, including the question of strategic arms limitations. The Deputy Foreign Ministers of the NATO governments, at President Nixon's suggestion, held the first of what we expected to be periodic reviews of major, long-range problems before the Alliance.

It is particularly important that there be the fullest consultations on the SALT talks (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) between the U.S. and the USSR. The very fact that these talks are going on has stimulated some uneasiness in Europe. It is well understood that the talks imply changing strategic relationships and that their success could further affect the situation. As President Nixon put it last spring: "The West does not have the massive nuclear predominance today that it once had, and any sort of broad-based arms agreement with the Soviets would codify the present balance."

Given the European sensitivities on SALT and nervousness

'We are welcoming and encouraging our Allies' efforts, particularly those of West Germany, to improve relations with the USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe.'

about changing military relationships, it would seem wise not to compound anxieties at this time by any moves to reduce our troop strength on the Continent.

While attempting to keep our allies abreast of our own negotiating activities, we are welcoming and encouraging their own efforts, particularly those of West Germany, to improve relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe.

Appraises Proposals for Change

Among the questions raised by those who favor an immediate and substantial reduction of our forces in Europe is whether the burden of NATO defense is now fairly allocated. The prosperous Europeans should, they feel, carry a much larger share of the defense of their own continent.

We agree—up to a point. The United States believes that our European allies can and should do more. We have told them often that if they increase their own efforts, it would help us to maintain ours. So even though they actually have increased their defense budgets to cover improvements in their forces, while our own defense budget has been declining,

we have and are continuing to press them to assume a larger share of Europe's defense responsibilities.

A precipitate reduction of U.S. forces in Europe would, however, not only fail to stimulate additional European effort, it would probably produce the contrary effect. The bulk of any substantial reductions in U.S. forces would have to be made up by West Germany, the most populous and wealthiest of our NATO allies. But the German people do not relish an enlargement of their country's military establishment. Nor certainly does a Soviet Union still highly emotional about its 20 million World War II dead and enormously sensitive on the subject of German "revanchism". Indeed, it would give pause even to some of Germany's allies.

Any significant rise in the German defense effort could thus destroy Chancellor Brandt's constructive efforts to improve relationships with the Federal Republic's Eastern neighbors and thereby halt the attempts to lay the foundation for a settlement of the issues still dividing Europe.

I spoke earlier of the fact that we did not want to suggest that the present number of U. S. troops in Europe was inviolate and could or would never be changed. We hope that conditions will eventually come about which will render their

'Tensions are lower . . . But the basic cement holding together the Alliance is still the threat from the East.'

presence altogether unnecessary. But when such conditions do come, I feel certain they will be the result of hard and patient bargaining.

Basis for NATO

Back in 1948, when the Cold War was very cold indeed, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, addressing himself to the Soviets' Andre Vyshinsky at a U.N. Security Council session, said: "The basis of our policy today in Europe is fear. We are afraid of you. We are afraid of your government and we are afraid of the policies which you are pursuing."

Twenty-two years later tensions are lower and East and West are engaged in substantive discussions aimed at lowering them further. But the basic cement holding together the Alliance is still the threat from the East. The United States does not control the Alliance. When France chose to withdraw from NATO we could not prevent it from doing so.

Unlike the Warsaw Pact, which rests on an ideological base guarded and sanctified by the Soviet Union, NATO has no dogmatic underpinnings. There is no Western version of the Brezhnev Doctrine. When there is no more threat to the security of the nations of Western Europe, there will be no more need for NATO. And only when the confrontation in

'The U.S. sees no conflict between the goal of European integration and the efforts . . . to end the dangerous and increasingly anachronistic division of the Continent.'

Europe truly ends and a genuine peace replaces the always precarious peace of mutual deterrence will the role of our troops be finally accomplished.

On another front, in response to the President's initiative, the Alliance has taken on a new dimension by creating a permanent committee on the Challenges of Modern Society to help deal constructively with some of the most pressing problems common to all its members—the problems of the environment.

European Integration

The United States, meanwhile, continues to support the goal of a politically and economically integrated Europe. Despite the recent signs of drift, economic integration has come far, and there are indications that new moves forward may be developing. The most ambitious of the European regional arrangements—the European Community of the Six—has already gone beyond the earlier conception of international cooperation to a new form of relationship among nation states.

The United States sees no conflict between the goal of European integration and the efforts now going forward to end the dangerous and increasingly anachronistic division of the Continent. We welcome the indication that dissatisfaction over the continuing gulf between the two halves of Europe is growing in the East as well. Stronger relationships in Western Europe itself can, we believe, facilitate the building of stronger relationships with the East.

"I believe we must build an Alliance," the President has said, "strong enough to deter those who would threaten war; close enough to provide for continuous and far-reaching consultation; trusting enough to accept a diversity of views; realistic enough to deal with the world as it is; flexible enough to explore new channels of constructive cooperation."

In the past year, I believe, we have strengthened the Alliance on each of these counts. Strength, closeness, trust, realism, flexibility—these will be useful assets as we move toward the new hopes and new possibilities of the "era of negotiation."

COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Over-all Interest Of Nation Is Basis For DoD Management Decisions

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many as the 30 largest industrial companies. It is spending $77 billion in the current fiscal year. Its assets run in the neighborhood of $200 billion, more than the combined assets of the 75 largest companies. In the private sector of the economy, more than two million workers are employed to fill Defense orders. The Department annually engages in more than 200,000 procurement actions of $10,000 or more involving more than 100,000 prime and sub-contractors. It manages installations and facilities, equipment and manpower in all 50 states and in more than 100 foreign countries.

A . . . difference between management in the Department of Defense and in a private enterprise is in evaluating results. We have no profit and loss statement to work against. The weapons we build for the defense of our country serve the country best if they *never* have to be used. This is most emphatically true of our nuclear weapons.

The performance of Department of Defense can be measured only by the extent to which the Department contributes to the over-all interest of the nation. All management decisions in the Department must be measured against this all-important criterion.

Since so much of the business of defense is preparation to avert possible future calamity, only after many years will we be able to determine with complete assurance whether we are doing the right things in the right amount and in the right way today. The greatest help that could be provided toward effective management of the Defense Department would be an infallible crystal ball. I am well aware that a good crystal ball is needed also, by the manager of a private enterprise, but in Defense we need one with much greater scope and much longer range.

At the present time there are two additional factors that make Defense management a difficult—indeed, a hazardous—occupation.

The first factor is the opposition to things military on the part of an articulate body of public opinion. When a large number of people view an enterprise with suspicion or hostility, the problem of giving effective management to that enterprise is compounded.

Let me make it clear that I am not complaining about close scrutiny of the Defense Department by Congress or by the press or the public. Such scrutiny is proper and necessary under our system of government. If it is responsible, it is wholesome and can be a spur to more efficient operation. When, however, surveillance is exercised in a way that needlessly erodes morale, it does not contribute to good management.

The second factor that currently adds to the difficulty of managing the Defense Department is the fact that the Department is no longer a growth industry. On the contrary, it is now in the throes of rather rapid shrinkage.

Earlier, I offered you a few figures on such matters as number of Defense personnel and size of Defense expenditures. These figures are all lower today than those I would have cited had I been speaking to you a year ago. And they are higher than the figures I would cite if I were speaking to you six months from now.

In the period from last June 30 through the next fiscal year, the military forces will have been reduced by 551,000 men and the civilian work force, by 130,000. Expenditures in FY 69 were $78.7 billion, in FY 70, $77 billion, and we will spend less than $72 billion in FY 71 which begins July 1 of this year.

The budget for Fiscal 1971, which President Nixon submitted to Congress two weeks ago, cuts Defense spending to 34.6 per cent of total Federal outlays, the lowest percentage in 20 years. In terms of the Gross National Product, Defense spending will drop to 7 per cent, the lowest level since 1951. Defense programs have become deflationary in their trend downward, with the major impact yet to come.

While these special management problems are inherent in the Department and are not likely to change, we have taken a number of steps during the past year which I believe are in the direction of much needed improvement.

Three important steps are directed toward making better decisions on the size and character of military forces which are needed to support the national interest. These are the key decisions which must be made before questions relating to the kinds and numbers of weapons to be developed and procured can be addressed.

First, the National Security Council machinery has been revitalized to evaluate more carefully what the worldwide commitments of the United States should be, and what military force levels are necessary to support those commitments.

With the help of the National Security Council, President Nixon has made the most comprehensive and thorough study of the nation's needs and resources ever undertaken. On the basis of that study, Defense needs have been allotted their place in a scheme of national priorities.

Second, a new arm of the National Security Council has been established, called the Defense Program Review Committee, to address questions of Defense Policy at the level of specific military programs. The DPRC has the task of considering major defense matters, not only from a military standpoint, but also from a broader viewpoint. In particular, this group addresses defense matters in relation to the non-defense priorities of the nation and recommends resource allocation between defense and non-defense programs.

Third, we have made changes in procedures within the Department of Defense for developing budgets, five-year plans, and programs. The changes, which provide for more effective participation by the Joint Chiefs and the military services, are producing more realistic planning and budgeting and better teamwork among the Services.

Each of these steps is in the direction of better decision making from the highest level of policy-making down to the level of specific force planning, and at the very least it should remove a bit of haze from our crystal ball.

We have also been addressing the question of how to improve the management of the development and procurement of specific weapons and equipment. With the great furor this last year about cost growth and cost overruns it should come as no surprise that we in the Defense Department are also concerned.

As one examines programs which are in trouble—and we

find lots of examples—there are some conclusions that can be drawn about the origins of the problems.

It is clear that the problems of developing new and complex weapons and equipment have, in nearly every case, been underestimated with the result that early estimates of both cost and time required for development proved faulty.

Too much emphasis has been placed on meeting rigid time schedules with the result that production was undertaken too often before development was finished. The short cut of rushing into production before resolving the problems encountered in research and development has been costly.

Altogether, too little attention has been given to controlling cost.

Program managers have been rotated out of their jobs before they became fully effective to be replaced by new managers without prior experience with their programs. We found that 60 per cent of the Army's program managers served for less than two years, too short a time for effective management.

Authority and responsibility have been diffused among many offices and individuals so that the decision making has been retarded.

Changes in funding from year to year have required expensive modifications of programs.

These deficiencies all have contributed to the well-publicized problem of cost growth for military equipment. In addition to these deficiencies, inflation has been an important contributing cause.

This whole problem has received intensive study during the past year, particularly since Secretary Laird reported the cost growth he had become aware of after his first few weeks in office. We are taking steps to reform management procedures in order to reduce the instances of substantial cost growth in weapons and equipment. I shall not try to tell you in detail the changes that have been introduced to secure more realistic cost estimates, better monitoring of progress through the stages of development and production, longer tenure for program managers, and more orderly transition from development to production.

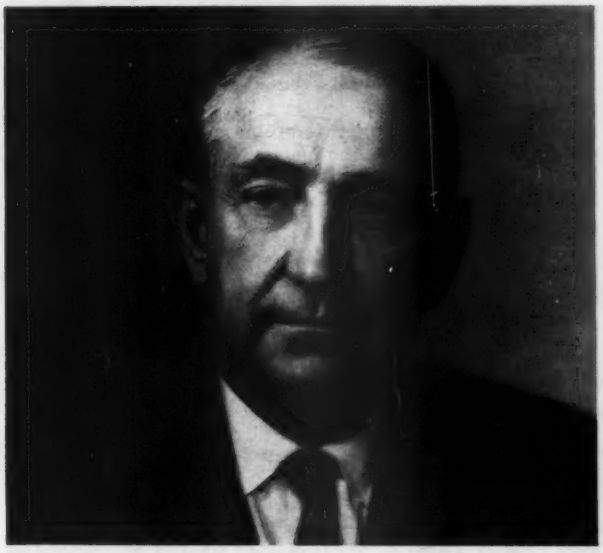
Let me mention, however, one fundamental change in management concepts that is gradually being introduced in the Defense Department which I think will lead to improvement across-the-board—the concept of selective decentralization.

We believe that more decentralization will improve management efficiency. This involves reducing the number of layers of management, and a more precise definition of the responsibility and authority of various offices in the OSD and in the Services. Action to do this has been started during the past year, and again, we intend to proceed further during the FY 71 budget period.

When Secretary Laird and I assumed office, it seemed that too many decisions had to be made at the top and that too detailed a supervision of operations was carried on in the office of Secretary of Defense. We are shifting to the military Services more decision-making authority.

Basic policy decisions will still be made at the top. Goals must be set there. But greater leeway is being given to subordinates to exercise initiative about the means pursued to achieve these goals. Increased authority at lower levels requires increased responsibility for results.

This means more emphasis on people and so I cannot conclude a discussion of management of the Department without



Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard

a word about people, who, as you know, are far more important to successful management than procedures.

We are seeking to open up channels through which bright ideas down the line can be brought to the attention of those at the top. We are seeking to broaden the flow of information on Defense policy throughout the Department. And we are doing our utmost to assure that no barriers exist to the upward movement of talented people—particularly barriers based on race or creed or national origin.

We want every person in the Defense Department to be proud of his organization and to feel that he is an important person doing a vital job.

Successful management of the Department of Defense depends to an important degree on the quality of management in the private industry of our nation. This is true for a number of reasons. Those who come to us to fill managerial positions often have had experience and training in private industry. Further, we must look to industry to produce the equipment and the arms with which our armed forces defend our nation.

At the present time the Department of Defense is taking advantage of the managerial talent of the private sector in the study of its organization and operation that has been undertaken by the Blue Ribbon Commission chaired by Gilbert Fitzhugh, chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company . . .

The American Management Association and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers are making an immense contribution to the understanding and application of the principles of good management. In doing so, they make a direct and substantial contribution to better management of the Department of Defense.

I accept this medal, established in memory of a great pioneer of good management, Henry Laurence Gantt, with a commitment to do my best to apply those principles to the job of making sure this country receives maximum value for every dollar spent on defense.

Military Phase Of Vietnamization Encouraging To Defense Officials

(Continued From Page One)

report that as far as the progress that is being made on the Vietnamization program, that progress is good and we can move forward with the continuing program of turning over the combat responsibilities to the forces of South Vietnam, all of the combat responsibilities to the forces of South Vietnam, which is in Phase I of the Vietnamization program.

Question: Mr. Secretary, you said the military aspects are moving ahead of schedule in Vietnamization. What about the other aspects? Are you just as pleased with those?

Secretary Laird: There are problems and I don't want to underestimate the problems in connection with Vietnamization. There are problems as we make the changes as far as the economy is concerned. There also will be setbacks as far as the military program is concerned. The forces of South Vietnam will have problems as they take over these full responsibilities in this area, but I'm confident that they can handle the military problems that do exist. They will be able to take on some adverse problems, some difficulties, and I think the program will certainly be a success. We have fine leadership in Vietnam. The meetings which I had with Ambassador (Ellsworth) Bunker, with General (Creighton) Abrams and their staffs, gave me a feeling of confidence in the kind of leadership that they're giving to this over-all program.

I'd also like to report that meetings General Wheeler and I had with President Thieu and his staff were very fine, and we had a frank and open discussion, and I'm sure that the planning, the joint planning, that's going on between the Joint General Staff of the Vietnamese government and General Abrams' staff is moving along in a very fine manner. There is a real understanding of the importance of the Vietnamization program, the importance of it as far as the whole Nixon Doctrine is concerned in Southeast Asia.

General Wheeler, perhaps you'd like to make a comment or two. I'm doing all the talking here.

General Wheeler: I would agree with Secretary Laird that the progress of the improvement and modernization program is gratifying. As the Secretary said, we are either on schedule or ahead of schedule in all of our military programs. I would like to emphasize one thing that he said, and that is I know of no war where one side has won all of the battles, so I am sure that there will be some setbacks sustained which we will have to overcome. But in the long term, I am sure also that the Vietnamization program will work as long as we move in a prudent way across a broad front of the various programs involved.

Question: General Wheeler, you keep mentioning, you and Secretary Laird, the setbacks that might come. What particular problem areas concern you the most?

General Wheeler: Well, as I said, in no war that I know of has one side won all the battles, and I can certainly visualize the enemy exercising his capabilities, and he has substantial capabilities, to concentrate against some unit of the Vietnamese armed forces perhaps and inflicting defeat upon it, hoping thereby to gain a substantial psychological victory and prove "that the Vietnamization program is no good and will not work."

Secretary Laird: There are so many places that this responsibility is being turned over, gentlemen. General Wheeler and I were down very near the Cambodian border where the 25th Division of the South Vietnamese forces is taking over and will be confronting the North Vietnamese, and the VC, in a very sustained basis there. This is the area where the 49th Regiment of the 25th South Vietnamese Division has taken over in the very difficult Citadel area where the VC has dug in over a long period of time. The caves are some 800 feet long, 15 feet deep. Now, the problem here is that from time to time the forces of South Vietnam will suffer some setbacks. They've been winning every battle for the last six months, and I think it's just well to bear in mind that in a war like this every battle will not be won by one side.

The point we're making is, the military progress that is being made by the South Vietnamese forces is more than adequate and is ahead of schedule as far as the Vietnamization program that has been approved by President Nixon, in cooperation through the joint planning of the General Staff of the South Vietnamese forces and General Abram's staff.

Question: Mr. Secretary, there is also the point though that you are telling the ARVN that if they do have a setback it does not necessarily mean we move back yet.

Secretary Laird: Certainly I do not believe that it will be necessary for the United States forces to move back in. I believe the South Vietnamese forces have adequate backup to handle the situations and they will be able to handle them adequately. General Abrams has assured me that the threat can be handled adequately and I do not have that concern after listening to the various briefings and discussing this matter with our military leaders and with the military leaders of the South Vietnamese forces.

Question: President Thieu feels the same way, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary Laird: Yes, President Thieu is very confident that the South Vietnamese can move forward with the Vietnamization program and take over this responsibility.

Question: How does he feel about the withdrawal schedule?

Secretary Laird: There is better cooperation I think, a better understanding, of the Vietnamization program than at any time. As you know, it was just about a year ago that General Wheeler and I went to Vietnam and we outlined at that time the new program which has been moving forward this past year to prepare the South Vietnamese forces to meet not only the VC threat but also the North Vietnamese threat and this program is undersood by the South Vietnamese government and the cooperation is excellent and the planning is a joint planning effort, and there is no disagreement over the program that has been approved by President Nixon.

Question: Sir, do you suspect that there might be a strong effort by the North Vietnamese or VC along Cambodia in the next few weeks?

Secretary Laird: I wouldn't want to make any kind of a forecast or prediction along that line, but I will say that the forces we have in Vietnam can handle that threat.

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